

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01508 230924Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 HA-05 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /055 W
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O 230900Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9493

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1508

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, KS
SUBJECT: OPEN LETTER FROM FORMER MYONGDONG PRISONERS

REF: A) SEOUL 1466; B) STATE 44834

1. CHARGE CALLED ON ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER YUN HA-CHONG
FEB. 23. CHARGE TOLD YUN HE HOPED ROKG WOULD NOT TAKE ANY
ACTION AGAINST PERSONS WHO SIGNED OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT
CARTER, EMPHASIZING THAT AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD NEVER ACCEPT
JUSTIFICATION FOR PERSECUTION OF ANYONE ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS
TO US PRESIDENT. CHARGE ADDED THAT HE HOPED TOO THAT ROKG
WOULD CONTINUE PROGRESS MADE TOWARD END OF LAST YEAR IN
HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD. HE NOTED THAT THIS PROGRESS COULD BE
SUSTAINED BY RELEASE OF KIM TAE-CHUNG, OTHER EM PRISONERS
AND LIFTING OF EM-9.

2. YUN STATED THAT HE NOTED CHARGE'S POINTS. HE STATED
THAT ROKG WOULD FORGET OPEN LETTER INCIDENT AND WOULD TAKE
NO ACTION AGAINST SIGNATORIES UNLESS THEY SHOULD COMMIT
SOME SERIOUS PROVOCATION, OR UNLESS THERE IS MAJOR UPROAR
IN THE NITED STATES.

3. EMBASSY SPECIAL ASSISTANT MET REPRESENTATIVE OF KCIA
DIRECTOR ON FEB 23. SPECIAL ASSISTANT POINTED OUT THAT
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IF ROKG TOOK ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO SIGNED OPEN LETTER,
ROKG'S IMAGE IN US COULD SUFFER. KCIA REPRESENTATIVE
HAD RECEIVED REPORT OF EA/K DIRECTOR RICH'S CONVERSATION
WITH PARK OF ROK EMBASSY, AND HE REPLIED THAT KCIA HAD
NO INTENTION OF TAKING ACTION AGAINST THOSE WHO SIGNED
LETTER ON BASIS OF WHAT LETTER CONTAINED. KCIA REP
NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED WERE

DELIBERATELY ATTEMPTING TO PROVOKE ROKG TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THEM. HE SAID PERIOD AROUND MARCH 1 WOULD BE TENSE, BUT THAT KCIA WAS APPROACHING SITUATION CAUTIOUSLY. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS A LIMIT TO HOW MUCH PROVOCATION THE ROKG COULD TOLERATE.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, SPECIAL ASSISTANT SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT BE CERTAIN, IF USG REPLIED TO OPEN LETTER, REPLY WOULD CONFIRM THAT DEPARTMENT'S REPORT REPRESENTED CONSIDERED JUDGEMENT OF USG. KCIA REP SUGGESTED THAT REPLY SAY THAT USG WAS SATISFIED THAT ROKG WAS ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN KOREA.

5. SPECIAL ASSISTANT SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ROKG TO DEMONSTRATE CONTINUING EFFORT TO IMPROVE SITUATION. HE MENTIONED RELEASE OF KIM TAE-CHUNG, RELEASE OF REMAINING EM PRISONERS, LIFTING OF EM-9. KCIA REP SAID LIFTING OF EM-9 WAS NOT AN IMMEDIATE PROSPECT -- CERTAINLY NOT BEFORE THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. HE WAS NOT PREPARED AT THIS TIME TO SAY WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COULD BE DONE FOR KIM TAE-CHUNG. HE SAID THERE WAS FORWARD MOTION ON RELEASE OF EM-9, PRISONERS, BUT HE COULD NOT PREDICT WHEN THEY MIGHT BE LET GO.

6. SPECIAL ASSISTANT ALSO ASKED FOR AN UPDATE ON SITUATION OF YI MUN-YONG WHO WAS STILL BEING QUESTIONED BY POLICE.
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REPRESENTATIVE SAID HE WOULD CHECK AND REPORT.
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Message Attributes

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